
The **Catalyst**



The Newsletter for Interpretation in California State Parks

Spring/Summer 2009

Vol. 11, No. 1



Interpretive Training

"Learning is defined as a change in behavior.

You haven't learned a thing until you take action and use it."—Ken Blanchard



The Catalyst is published periodically by California State Parks, © 2009. Opinions expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of California State Parks. By submitting a manuscript to *The Catalyst* the author assumes full responsibility for any copyright infringement. Please contact the editor for permission to reprint any item appearing in *The Catalyst*.

ISSN 1089-9286

For address changes or additional subscriptions, call or email the Interpretation and Education Division at

(916) 654-2249
or
interp@parks.ca.gov

Guest Editor: Sara M. Skinner
Interpreter II, Training Specialist
Mott Training Center
Training Section
sskinner@parks.ca.gov

Publisher: Donna Pozzi
Interpretation & Education
(916) 653-4643
dpozz@parks.ca.gov

Copy Editor: John Werminski
Interpretation & Education
jwerm@parks.ca.gov

Contributor's Guidelines

The Catalyst welcomes your original articles up to two pages in length. We prefer unpublished material, but will occasionally reprint items published elsewhere. Be sure to include information about the publication so we can get permission to use the material. You may submit an article at any time. Please include a photograph whenever possible.

We really appreciate items submitted on CD or by email. We can read most DOS/Windows file formats. Please send photographs as separate files, not inserted into your document. You may also submit original photographs or other illustrations to *The Catalyst*. All photos and artwork submitted will be returned promptly. We reserve the right to edit all material. Items are selected for publication solely at the discretion of the editor and publisher. We appreciate your suggestions.

Guest Editors Wanted!

Are you looking for an opportunity to work with other writers on engaging interpretive topics? Would you like to develop and challenge your creative and technical skills? Then consider becoming a Guest Editor for an upcoming issue of *The Catalyst*. Among the topics we're planning for future issues are:

Interpretation and Technology
Interpreting Climate Change

Please contact Donna Pozzi with your ideas, dpozz@parks.ca.gov.

Ranger Richard Duthaler, from the Big Sur Sector, created a program about Banana Slugs when he was part of BVST 30. He returns every year to give his presentation to the next group of BVST cadets and has one of their own portray Slimon B. Slug. Featured here is Ranger Eric Christensen, a graduate of BVST 31.



Cover Photo: Guides and Interpreters pose for a class photo during Basic Interpretation for Guides and Interpreters at Marconi Conference Center (January 2009) facilitated by Interpreter III Michael Green and Interpreter II Ty Smith.

From the Editor

My transfer to the Mott Training Center in the fall of 2006 has been quite a learning experience. I am fortunate to oversee the training provided to California State Parks' employees involving Natural Resources, Cultural Resources, and Interpretation. I also coordinate the six-week Park Operations training for Basic Visitor Services Training (BVST), which gives our cadets their status of Rangers and Lifeguards. Training is the one thing that can get employees together in a positive way during times that are fraught with money issues and short staffing. We rely on our employees to provide many services to the public and within the Department for each other.

I am amazed at the abilities and desire of California State Parks' employees to train, to travel, and to engage. Professional organizations provide workshops and conferences annually that can enrich an employees' knowledge of current trends, materials, and methods. However, regular exchanges that occur in training sponsored by California State Parks allows the disciplines to improve system-wide programs, present effective techniques our Department is employing, and provides a forum for collaboration among peers. I am pleased to have served as the guest editor for this issue of *The Catalyst* revolving around Training.

The issue focuses on the development of interpretation training, methods, skills, how-to's, interpretive events, and more.

Michael D. Green, Interpreter III from Monterey State Historic Park, gracefully explains IPIT (read the article to find out what it stands for) in **IPIT Works for Improvement** on page 6. And, to wrap up the issue, he demonstrates an easier way for supervisors to track RAPPORT evaluations by using ETMS on page 19.

Carolyn Schimandle, Interpreter II with the Planning Division, encourages interpreters to make a program their own with **Personalizing Personal Interpretation** on page 7.

"I don't know what your destiny will be; but one thing I know; the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve." -Albert Schweitzer

Karen Barrett, Regional Interpretive Specialist for the Diablo Vista District, recaps the training that she, Sam Toffoli, and Teri Rogoway put together on **Skills for Interpreting to Children with Special Needs** on page 8.

Greg Kolinar, a docent for Santa Cruz District State Parks, demonstrates his dedication to interpretation in his articles **Creating a Better Docent** on page 10 and **Parent Chaperones-Use Them or Lose Them** on page 20.

Nancy Rogers, District Park Ranger and Interpretive Specialist with

"If you are not doing interpretation at your park then it is just another place for a picnic." -Walter Gray

the US Army Corps of Engineers, demonstrates a great way to reach management with interpretive programming in **Interpreting Your Way into the Hearts of Management** on page 11.

State Parks hosted a phenomenal event last year at Colonel Allensworth. **Steven Ptomey**, Interpreter III from Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park, channels his thoughts in his article **Allensworth Centennial: What Worked and What Fizzled** on page 12.

Michael Rodriques, Interpreter II for Anza Borrego Desert State Park, is encouraging you to challenge yourself and become certified in **A Certified Interpreter? Why?** on page 15.

Jean Rhyne, Interpreter I for the Tehachapi District, embellishes on her article from News and Views regarding the training she attend at Zzyzx in October of 2007. **Training to Understand and Interpret Deserts is a Hit!** is on page 16.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as Guest Editor. I hope to see all of you in future trainings.

Humbly,

Sara M. Skinner
Guest Editor

What's Up?



Resources for Interpreters

Many organizations, agencies, and groups offer training courses, workshops, and conferences applicable to our work. Below are a few websites. California State Parks employees may request to attend the training through Out-Service Training Requests on ETMS. For the training year the In-Service training courses offered by California State Parks can be viewed at www.parks.ca.gov/mott

Audubon: Audubon is pleased to support the vital role educators play in developing interest in the natural world with tips, strategies, projects, activities, games, and resources. <http://www.audubon.org/educate/educators/>

Bureau of Land Management (BLM): This website is produced and maintained by the Bureau's Division of Education, Interpretation, and Partnerships. Visitors can learn, commune, contemplate, serve, renew, revive, and re-center. http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/res/Education_in_BLM/Learning_Landscapes.html

California Council for the Promotion of History (CCPH): CCPH provides a forum for professional historians, curators, archeologists, interpreters, archivists, preservationists, historical organizations, and advocates can share ideas. <http://www.csus.edu/org/ccph/index.htm>

California Historical Society (CHS): The mission of CHS is to inspire and empower Californians to make the past a meaningful part of their contemporary lives. <http://www.californiahistoricalsociety.org/>

California Mission Studies Association (CMSA): This association is dedicated to the study and preservation of the California Missions, presidios, pueblos, and ranchos and their Native American, Hispanic, and Early American Past. <http://www.ca-missions.org/>

California Regional Environmental Education Community (CREEC): The CREEC Network brings together local, state, and federal agencies to support environmental education across California. This is a directory that allows you to add dates of trainings and a provider profile. <http://www.creec.org/>

Corporation for National and Community Service: The site has a resource center and tools and training for volunteer and service programs. <http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/>

Department of Fish and Game (DFG): They offer many educational programs including the Classroom Aquarium Education Project (CAEP), Fishing in the City, Nature Bowl, and Project WILD. <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/education/>

Department of Technology Services (DTS): Its Training and Event Center provides professional

low-cost information systems and management training for state, federal, and local government agencies. <http://www.dts.ca.gov/training/default.asp?key=20>

Environmental Education and Training Partnership (EETAP): This site offers educators information, resources, and links for promoting academic achievement and environmental literacy. <http://www.eetap.org/>

National Association for Interpretation (NAI): A professional association for those involved in the interpretation of natural and cultural heritage resources in settings such as parks, zoos, museums, nature centers, aquaria, botanical gardens, and historical sites. <http://www.interpnet.com/>

National Park Service (NPS): The National Park Service Interpretive Development Program (IDP) recognizes that successful interpretation is a skill that can be learned and refined. <http://www.nps.gov/interp/backup/idp/index.htm>

The Learning Place: <http://www.nps.gov/training/>

North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE): A network of people who believe in teaching people how to think about the environment, not what to think. <http://www.naaee.org/>

Dear Master Interpreter

Dear Master Interpreter,

I've heard that seasonals cannot attend training. Can you tell me why?

Sage Brush

Dear Sage Brush,

The verdict regarding seasonals attending training is constantly in flux. There are many schools of thought on why they should or should not be attending training. However, the current protocol for interpretation courses is the following: If the deadline has passed for permanent employees to submit a training request and the roster is still not full, then seasonals (with the support of their reporting location/Districts) may submit a training request. The requests will be approved on a first-come first-served basis with the support of the seasonal employees' supervisor. MI

Dear Master Interpreter,

I just attended local interpretation training in my county; can I get California State Parks training credit for this non-Department sponsored course?

Em T. Mass

Dear Em T. Mass,

Yes! The catalog in the Employee Training Management System (ETMS) is constantly changing and being updated with out-service trainings.

Please remember to submit the information regarding the training to the Training Specialist at the Mott Training Center who is responsible

for overseeing the Interpretation training statewide (for now that would be Sara M. Skinner) so that we can document the training. If you are providing training in your locations that includes interpretation training, in addition to your normally scheduled docent/volunteer trainings, we want to keep track of this. The training could be entered on to your training record and entered into ETMS for future reference and/or credit. MI

Dear Master Interpreter,

My park is in a remote area and we don't have access out here to some of the interpretive tools and equipment resources for field interpreters. Where can we find out what's available out there?
Dialing Dave

Dear Dialing Dave,

The best place to start looking is on the internet on the Interpreters' Resources and Tools pages (www.parks.ca.gov/interpertools). There are a wealth of resources there either in electronic format, or with annotations so you can determine if you want to request them in hard copy. The page is updated whenever a new or revised resource comes out, so be sure to check there periodically. If your connection just isn't "up to speed" and you can't access the resources there, you can contact the Interpretation and Education Division directly for a listing of items they can send to you in hard copy or on CD (they can be reached at 916



654-2249 or interp@parks.ca.gov).

Dear Master Interpreter,

With the budgets of local schools being impacted, many of my school groups are cancelling visits due to the loss of transportation. I know about PORTS; any other suggestions for bringing the park to the school?

Bro K. Buss

Dear Bro K. Buss,

When budgets are tight, that's the time to consider new ways of either getting kids to our parks or delivering our message to them. Do you have a cooperating association or local business that could cover the costs of a bus? Or how about helping the school with some sort of fundraiser? Alternatively, if you just can't find a way to get the kids to your park, then look for ways to take the park to them. Create a program that can be done in the classroom or outside at the school itself. Angeles District is becoming renowned for its "virtual campfire programs," as just one example. And if staffing is tight, as it always is, how about a program that you can have a few volunteers take on? We're all challenged when budgets start to shrink, but consider it an opportunity to look beyond the "norm" and you might be amazed at what you can achieve.

IPIT Works for Improvement

By Michael D. Green
State Park Interpreter III
Monterey State Historic Park

As one of its members, I'm sometimes asked, "What is the Interpretive Performance Improvement Team (IPIT) and what do you guys do?" Allow me to introduce IPIT to those who may not know about us and to provide some history that may clarify our role.

IPIT marks its beginning in a February 1998 memo from then Deputy Director Ken Jones. The memo begins, "At the recent Park Stewardship Policy Group meeting, the formation of an Interpretive Training Team was approved...." The memo was addressed to a small group of five interpreters who were charged with considering skill levels and classifications department-wide and "taking a comprehensive look at interpretive training." At its first meeting the newly formed team renamed itself IPIT and went to work.

In December 1998 IPIT submitted to the Park Stewardship Policy Group in Sacramento an issue paper to that pointed out the need to do more than "take a look at training." IPIT contended that what was needed was a systematic way of assessing performance and therefore the *need* for training. Citing 1996-97 department and visitor surveys, IPIT noted trends in California State Parks interpretation: 78% of supervisors said their districts lacked an overall plan for presenting interpretive programs, while 89% of interpreters had re-

ceived 0 or 1 evaluation during the previous year. And while 90% of supervisors polled said that evaluations were important to improve performance, 80% said they do not/cannot evaluate all of their employees. The picture that emerged from this data showed a core program without an objective strategy to measure success or generate improvement.

Recommendations in the 1998 issue paper included the formation of a standing Interpretive Improvement Team for each district, headed by the district superintendent and coordinated by a district interpretive specialist. IPIT proposed that each district formulate plans to evaluate programs systematically and encouraged using the then soon-to-be-published evaluation handbook *Aiming for Excellence*. IPIT also recommended that it should continue to monitor developments in interpretive performance measurement and "make appropriate recommendations to the Department to assist the continued improvement of interpretation in California State Parks."

In the decade since its formation, IPIT has conducted surveys to evaluate the need for training, developed and evaluated new training programs, made recommendations for scheduling existing programs, and investigated how other agencies measure interpre-

tive competency. We have also implemented and evaluated the Basic Interpretation Learning System (BILS) for academy cadets and have recommended its adoption for other basic interpretation training. Currently, IPIT has formed a subcommittee to assess and update BILS. Additionally, IPIT continues to review post-training evaluations of interpretive programs and recommend ways to improve training and performance. The team also looks forward to attending the Training for District Interpreters (formally the DIC Workshop) when DIC's from around the state gather for training and report on their recent or upcoming projects. The latest session attended by IPIT was held at Marconi Conference Center in January 2008 during



which we shared ideas, reported on IPIT projects, and heard DIC's concerns.

Recently IPIT created a folder on the Department Share (N:\) Drive containing interpretive resources, including a *Statewide Teacher's Guide* and a list of IPIT-recommended materials for your interpretive library. We have only begun posting materials there, you can anticipate more resources to come.

Personalizing Personal Interpretation:

Encouraging New Interpreters to Make It Their Own

By Carolyn Schimandle
State Park Interpreter II
Planning Division

My favorite description of interpretation comes from Anatole France: "[A]waken people's curiosity. It's enough to open minds; do not overload them. Put there just a spark. If there is some good flammable stuff, it will catch fire."

One way to inspire that fire is to toss out the canned scripts and encourage trainee interpreters to develop their own interpretive program outline, based on what *they* find most interesting and important about the site or topic. Rather than reciting a pre-packaged script in an uninspired (and uninspiring) way, the interpreter with the self-tailored program will be sharing personal passion.

Some folks enjoy creating a personalized program, but others are intimidated by the task. Most people fall somewhere in between. I suggest providing tools the trainees can use if they wish—an example program outline that they can work from if they need a big push, and some sets of sample themes and subthemes they can use or adapt if they just require a little nudge.

Incorporate program development into the thematic interpretation training. Introduce the trainees immediately to the concept of themes and have them practice writing themes based on key topic or site information. (Remember, "do not overload them" with informa-

tion; they will learn more as they develop their personal areas of interest.) Next, have them select their favorite from their list of themes (or *your* list of themes, if they need the training wheels), and develop subthemes based on further research.

As the training progresses, they will learn how to develop an opening and closing to introduce and summarize the main theme; to structure the body of the program based on the type of presentation (e.g. guided tour, campfire program, hands-on activity, living history); and finally to add elements to make the program more enjoyable and engaging, such as multi-sensory activities, hands-on objects, and thought-provoking questions. At each step of the development process, the trainer and the other trainees will be a friendly audience for practice, feedback, and ideas.

Introduce program evaluation early and positively by having the trainees use the self-evaluation RAPPORT form from *Aiming for Excellence*. It makes a dandy checklist of what to remember when developing a program, as well as for a regular post-presentation check-in on what could be improved.

Once the personal programs are in fully-developed form, it's time for dress rehearsal. Fellow trainees and familiar trainers provide a kind audience, as the trainees take turns presenting their programs (or shortened versions, if necessary) to each other in small groups. Keep the emphasis on sharing encour-

agement and positive feedback. The *Aiming for Excellence* standard RAPPORT evaluation form works well for peer review, and the RAPPORT elements will be familiar from the self-evaluation. If anyone wants more practice before going public, suggest presenting their program to friends and family, or teaming with other trainees to practice again.

Is it worth taking the time to do all this training and coaching instead of providing a program script for memorization? What's in it for the trainer? First of all, it's a kick to see the variety of program themes and audience-engaging ideas people create. You'll find yourself thinking more than once, "Hmmm. What a neat angle. I think I'll borrow that."

But best of all, when the new interpreters are sharing what *THEY* think is important, their interest and enthusiasm will be like a crown fire in a high wind—those sparks will fly *everywhere!*



Monterey State Historic Park
Interpreter Lisa Bradford
personalizing her tour

Skills for Interpreting to Children with Special Needs

By Karen J. Barrett
Regional Interpretive Specialist
Diablo Vista District

"On Saturday - yesterday - I had what I could identify as an A.D.D. small Boy Scout at R.F.O. and I was able to be present to him in a whole new way! His mom was so grateful. I told her about the training and she was so grateful that State Parks cared enough to give the topic some attention." - Laurie O'Hare, State Park Volunteer/Sugarloaf Ridge State Park

The inspiration for Diablo Vista and Marin Districts to offer "Skills for Interpreting to Children with Special Needs" to park staff and volunteers came from several sources: The "Children in Nature Campaign," the desire to make sure that everyone, including visitors with disabilities, has access to the wonders of our park system, an interest in collaborating on a two-district interpretive project, and the luck of discovering an experienced interpreter with a proven track record on this topic.

Our engaging instructor's years of experience interpreting to children with special needs made for a practical and fun day of skill building. Through lecture and hands-on activities, Teri Rogoway, Coordinator of Interpretive Programs for the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority was able to help participants learn more about children with autism, Down's Syndrome, and Attention Deficit



Interpreters and guides from Marin District and Diablo Vista District get their feet dirty.

Disorder. We left with tools to conduct enjoyable and effective interpretive programs.

When asked how the training will benefit interpreters, Teri replied, "This will help you become an amazing public servant. It sharpens your observation skills, heightens your awareness, encourages empathy and compassion, and gives you an alternate perspective. It makes you aware of all your visitors and alleviates the feelings of helplessness you may feel if you need to provide a program or service for a group you have never encountered or feel ill prepared to communicate with. The best way to overcome unease or nervousness is to jump in and practice. This program gives you a head start."

For the past couple of years, Teri has promoted interpretive programming to school groups of children with special needs. She has developed in-classroom and outdoor activities that provide a portal for children with limited mobility and health challenges to opening the outdoors. She is working on her Masters of Arts from Prescott College in Arizona.

How does working with children with special needs differ from interpreting to children who are able bodied? According to Teri, "Children who are able bodied tend to keep your focus on the material and the information conveyed. Children with disabilities keep your focus on the experience and helping

to make it work. It means the interpreter must slow down and become flexible and adaptive. It is the height of thinking on your feet."

For four and a half hours, Teri facilitated a relevant training agenda. She was a credible trainer because she is an experienced interpreter. She modeled her teaching by having a visual agenda along with the written one and used soothing music to call the group back from breaks. Her definitions of special needs were laced with facts and examples from her Open Space Authority interpretive programs. The afternoon session gave us an opportunity to create practical tools, experience physical challenges, and learn where to go for more information.

It was fun to make useful, small, handheld signs from cardstock and tongue depressors. We drew stick figures, and then captioned them with words to focus children with Attention Deficit Disorder on a task that will help them safely explore a park. We illustrated words like "hike," "look," and "listen." To get an idea what it might be like to have physical limitations, we volunteered to have our hands and fingers taped or used our feet, instead of hands, to look for nature's treasures by digging in the dirt with our toes. We learned

a new phrase, "challenge by choice" that honors how, or if, someone decides to participate in an activity.

Next we found where to learn more. Teri really likes "All Visitors Welcome" (available on the California State Parks website), and shared many web sites available on special needs topics. The session concluded with a written evaluation of the training session, and the feedback continues to be overwhelmingly positive!

The idea for the training session started when Regional Interpretive Specialist Karen Barrett (Diablo Vista District) attended Teri's training session at the 2008 California Parks Conference (co-sponsored by the California State Park Rangers Association). Karen and Regional Interpretive Specialist Samantha Toffoli (Marin District) then collaborated to expand Teri's one hour session and bring it to the North Bay's State Park volunteers and paid staff.

Generously, the Open Space Authority donated Teri's time and training materials. In turn, Karen and Sam collaborated to find a training location, promote the training and recruit participants, and provide training day refreshments. They assisted Teri with refining her skills as trainer by working with her to develop an agenda and participant evaluation forms. Later, they provided detailed written feedback to her on the session.

As a result of working with State Parks, the Open Space Authority will continue to invest in its goal of providing interpretive programs to children with special needs. It is paying for Teri to attend "Training for Interpretive Trainers" at the Mott Training Center. Additionally, plans are in the works for Teri to present this material during the National Association for Interpretation's Region 9 Spring Workshop and to conduct a Mott Training Center session.

Below: Nancy Otter and Nina Gordon experiment with crafts.



Creating a Better Docent

By Greg Kolar

Docent

Santa Cruz District State Parks

You already know how important good interpretation is to the people who visit your park. As a result, you have created an interpretive training program that works, and works quite well. What more can you do? It's the missing ingredient. It can make as much difference as a pinch of salt does to your cooking, and it is just as easy to add. You can teach your new trainees how to Think like a Docent.

What does Think like a Docent actually mean? As you know, the large amount of information your new docents get in their training is not enough to make them good teachers or interpreters. "Information, by itself, is not interpretation" (Tilden). Interpretation is being able to relate that information to the park visitor's own life and present it in such a way that it interests that visitor. Think like a Docent means that you teach trainees how to invent unique interpretive ways to enlighten and entertain the park visitors they will work with. To Think like a Docent just might be the most important skill you can teach them.



Remember how you learned to ride a bicycle? It was simple. You watched other people do it, then you tried it yourself; and finally you tried it again and again...practice makes perfect. How can you get trainees to learn how to interpret all the information they are receiving each week in their training? It's easy. You do it the same way you learned to ride a bike.

It's as easy as riding a bike

First, you have the trainees watch good interpretation in action each week. How? No problem, the fact is you are already having them do this; don't they get all their information from presenters who actually are good teachers and interpreters? All you have to do is have the trainees notice how and why these presenters interest, provoke, and educate them during each training session. Have them make a list...what things did my instructor do that really related to and educated me? Then have them share that list with each other. In doing so, they learn to recognize good techniques.

So now that they have watched other people create good interpretation, how do you get them to try it themselves... again and again? This is also quite simple. Have them imitate the interpretive techniques used by the presenters, or have them choose one interesting piece of information each week from the

training session and then turn it into interpretation. They can do this exercise as homework, bring it with them to the next training session (and every session thereafter), and share it with one another. There will be some skinned knees and elbows (egos), but it will only get better. They will learn from each other and inspire and contribute to the interpretive program in ways you may not have considered. But remember, it's like learning to ride a bike—you have to try it again and again. It's the only way to learn how...to Think like a Docent.

What results can you expect from this program? One measurable, printable result you will get is a fair number of interpretive ideas that the docent trainees have created based on the information they receive during the training. This is a wonderful resource that you can edit, print, and provide to the trainees each week. Hopefully, you can compile the ideas for your regular docents as well. This can serve as a treasure chest of ideas that all of your docents can use when they interact with park visitors.

How do you start? Contact Greg Kolar at zena200@comcast.net and he will send you a sample Thinking like a Docent worksheet, which can easily be copied and adapted to your park, as well as examples of how to publish and share your trainees' interpretative work. That's all there is to it. It's as easy as riding a bike.

Interpreting Your Way in to the Hearts of Management

By Nancy Rogers
District Park Ranger and
Interpretive Specialist
San Francisco District
US Army Corps of Engineers

In the US Army Corps of Engineers the operative words are "Army" and "Engineers." This very old (1775) agency, born out of military necessity, has taken as many wild turns in its history as the rivers it has tried to tame. Fast forward to 2009 and the Corps now operates 439 flood control projects nationwide and proudly proclaims its status as the nation's #1 outdoor recreation provider on the lakes and lands it manages. Despite this commanding statistic, the agency is still culturally and steadfastly connected to its engineering and military traditions. Park rangers are challenged to connect the public with the recreation resources, while constantly justifying the program to their military and engineering leadership. Hmmm-----does this sound like a job for Provoke, Relate, and Reveal?

Interpretation is typically a bit player. Most Corps park rangers are tasked with interpretation as an adjunct to their other duties—there are very few full-time interpretive rangers in the Corps. So how have interpreters and interpretation survived? As an instructor for the Corps' Interpretive Services course, I and my co-instructors designed our training to use interpretation as a communication tool that helps rangers do their job everyday. When I was a

visitor center manager, I often hosted VIP visits from the Corps' Headquarters, Pentagon, and Department of Army. I was lucky to have ten minutes to "show the Chief around." I can't tell you how many times I used my interpretive training to drill a point home.

One of the Corps' interpretive goals is to support agency missions and programs, and it's an area where interpretation becomes important to management. A good interpreter should be shared. This may take some internal marketing via the manager in the leadership circle that is responsible for interpretive services. My entrée into this world is my own Chief of Operations and Readiness. He regularly attends the district engineer's briefing meetings where senior staff discuss initiatives, priorities, and issues they must support down through the organizations they manage. It was there that he volunteered my assistance to improve recruiting and information content for the district's website. I scrambled to describe programs I didn't know much about, but it was fun and grew into my assignment for



Managers learn about the resources and interpretation at Tomales Bay State Park.

the division committee to overhaul the look and content for every program area for our entire division. Is this in my job description? No, but when interpretation reaches beyond the boundaries of the park, it demonstrates the value of its skilled practitioners.

The senior leaders who make the funding and priority decisions to support your interpretive services programs need to know that the money they are spending will advance the agency's ability to meet its mission. They have to answer the "so what" question too-- especially when testifying about their budget before Congressional committees. If I've done my job well, I'll gladly discuss my plans for renovating our visitor centers and maybe, just maybe— they'll listen.

Nancy Rogers can be reached at nancy.l.rogers@usace.army.mil

Allensworth Centennial: What Worked and What Fizzled

By Steven Ptomey
State Park Interpreter III
Colonel Allensworth
State Historic Park

October 11th and 12th, 2008 California State Parks, the Legislative Black Caucus, the California State Parks Foundation, and the Friends of Allensworth celebrated the 100th anniversary of the town of Allensworth. This was the largest event in Allensworth's history, involving elected officials, celebrities, scholars, as well as numerous federal, state, and local agencies. The big question was: How can a park with such a small staff handle an event of this size? It was simple. We couldn't. Even reinforcements recruited from the district meant that we would be woefully understaffed for the projected 4000-plus crowd. The answer was to call upon park professionals from throughout California State Parks to commit to working the event. The end result was that over 38 professionals ranging from guides, to interpreters, park volunteers, curators, environmental science



Speaker Karen Bass and members of the Legislative Black Caucus

interns, office techs, park aides, rangers and even a couple of division chiefs committed to helping the public interpretation program. But the story doesn't end there. In fact, this was the start of the real work.

Training the Team

Once people were committed to work the event, training them on the cultural history of Allensworth became the priority, a major challenge considering that the groups represented numerous clas-

sifications, educational backgrounds, experience, and spread from San Diego to Sacramento. Training was accomplished using four different methods, (we will call them Group A, B, C and D) each with varying levels of success.

Prior to the event, Group A, consisting primarily of guides from Hearst Castle, were given a one-hour in-person presentation by the CASHP Interpreter, the 45 minute orientation video, followed by hard copies of the docent manual and a briefing that covered the most frequently asked questions, expectations, and general information about the park. The day before the event this group participated in a Kids Day at Allensworth for Tulare County Schools, plus a brief 40 minute Walking Tour of the Park to



Guides from the State Capitol



Andre Ramos, Shera McDonald, Tina Williams, Kevin Forrester, and Ron Krueper

see the layout of facilities, bathrooms, and concessions.

Group B was composed of guides from the Capital and received similar training except that they received the presentation on Allensworth via video-conferencing. Because of technical difficulties, they did not get the slide show presentation or the orientation video, and they received the docent manual via email.

Group C consisted of interpreters, park aides, volunteers, and a curator. They received the docent manual electronically and a video-conference as well as the in-park orientation, and staffed the Kids Day prior to the main event.

The final group, Group D, consisted of everyone else, who either by location, last minute assignment, or for some other compelling reason did not get a chance to attend a formal training, but did receive the in-park walk around the day before the event and had access to a docent manual at their station.

What Went Right

The event clearly showed the deep

level of professionalism and *esprit de corps* that is at the heart of our California State Parks professionals. Their commitment to doing a good job even when things don't go as

planned is, at the core, what made the event work.

The formal training that Groups A and B received several weeks prior to the event seemed to prepare them quite well. The in-person, small group setting works very well. The combination of formal presentation with an audio-visual component and an on-the-ground orientation worked quite well. Group A seemed very confident and comfortable with leading house tours. However, that in-person time is not always possible, with budget constraints, fuel, and *per diem* costs on the rise. Technology helped fill the gap.

The other two groups did very well also with the basic information by video conference, but the on-the-ground walk-through put things into perspective much better. While a photograph of the area can convey information about the buildings and the people, it couldn't capture the bleakness of the surrounding landscape or the isolation of this community from nearby towns, an important part of the Allensworth experience.

The task that you are training associates for can determine how intense your methods should be. As for Group C, the actual information about Allensworth, while important, wasn't as critical to their mission. They were the group that performed living history demonstrations. They filled a critical hole in the interpretation at Allensworth (one that I have been attempting to fill). The important note here is that the technology for these historical daily chores change over time, but the skill set is basically the same. An interpreter presenting an early 19th century blacksmith can portray an early 20th century blacksmith just as convincingly. He



Buffalo Soldiers

or she might change clothing and tools, but the basic skills and interpretive message remain the same.

Group D was comprised of a wide mix of classifications and backgrounds that did not receive the written material before coming to Allensworth but did get the tour. The walking tour was helpful to put the park in perspective, especially to those who had the training. For some, this was their first exposure to the park, and it seemed overwhelming for a few initially. An important part of this process was to have key staff conduct the tour. The key staff needed to know the background of the event, what to expect, train and bus schedules, where to park, lunch breaks, how long it actually takes to walk across the park, and whom to notify in case of emergency.

to find out that this was the first they had heard of it, or they couldn't make it, or they were the wrong person. This complicated the training and planning process.

A second thing that didn't go as planned was the event interpretive plan. I had drafted a plan with station locations, summaries of what these stations were supposed to do, the expected traffic flow, who was assigned where, and I had areas broken down into groups with group leaders to handle problems as



Ted Jackson confers with Alice Royal, a Hackett Family Descendant

they occurred and who were instructed to contact me only with the big issues. Well, that didn't happen. I still have the draft. But between the constant changes in staffing, program scheduling and all the other

small things that went wrong-or did

not go according to plan—it was never finalized in a written format or disseminated. I did issue the assignment roster. This is why you see very few pictures of me at the event: I was never in one place long enough to be captured on film! I spent more time dealing with small problems that should have been delegated to a group leader. At an

event this large, delegation is a manager's best friend. In the future, the interpretive event plan will be finished and disseminated well in advance to the team, with roles and responsibilities well defined.

Summary

This department can do amazing and wonderful things when we pull together to get the job done. We also have some great new tools in our interpreters' knapsacks to train and educate our folks in preparation for these events. Video conferencing is one of them and for training it works well, but only if it's part of a comprehensive program and followed up with an on-the-ground orientation session before the event. It is not the magic bullet, but it is shiny and new. In the end, the process we used worked and the event itself was a success. However, no matter how good your plan is or how well your program is organized, its success depends upon the hard work and professionalism of the many people who are our California State Parks family.



Food lines were long, but worth the wait.

What Didn't Go Right

Communication between who was assigned to the event and the interpretation team didn't work as well as planned. As I got names of those interested in working the event, I contacted them individually to let them know what was happening and what we had planned, only

A Certified Interpreter? Why?

By
Michael Rodriques
State Park Interpreter II
Anza Borrego Desert State Park

There are a lot of interpretive training programs, but only one is nationally accredited: the Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) program developed by the National Association for Interpretation (NAI). Because most formal park interpretive training is not available to volunteers looking to expand the limits of their park service, the CIG program is an important and complementary supplement to the established training regimen.

The CIG program consists of four 8-hour training days, focusing on the development and delivery of personal interpretive programs. The training starts with a brief look at the history of interpretation and its development as a profession, linking the beginning interpreter to the traditions of the art of interpretation. Becoming emotionally connected to the likes of John Muir and Enos Mills is inspiring and creates a feeling of continuity with the past. The importance of audience and resource research to direct the focus of the program are emphasized, leading to strong, mission-based thematic programs. Successful program development techniques gathered from diverse sources include using tangibles, intangibles, and universal concepts to forge an emotional connection between the visitor and the resource.

The CIG program uses the acronym

POETRY: Purpose, Organized, Enjoyable, Thematic, Relevant, and You to describe the basic elements of interpretation. For California State Park instructors, an easy bridge to the concept of **RAPPORT: Relevant, Accurate, Provocative/Enjoyable, Programmatically accessible, Organized, Retained, Thematic**, can be introduced at this point to highlight the similarities and differences between the two systems.

The importance of program evaluation for improving the quality of state park interpretation is part of a coaching system that inspires and nurtures interpreters at all skill levels. The program delivery section employs sound interpretive communication techniques ranging from question-and-response strategy, use of voice, body language, appropriate use of humor, props, and overcoming fear, and it even includes a checklist to insure nothing is forgotten. The final elements required for graduation include a rigorous exam, submitting a program outline and delivery of a ten-minute thematic program to the class.

The CIG program is important to incorporate into California State Parks interpretation training because:

- The local staff Certified Interpretive Trainer (CIT) becomes

a mentor and coach for each class of interpreters.

- The expense of training a staff member to become a CIT is nominal compared to sending volunteers or other staff to State Parks training classes.
- Park cooperating associations could cover the CIT training expense, as was the case in Anza-Borrego.
- Each class forms a cohesive unit united by shared chal-



Participants in Training for Interpretive Trainers in 2007.

lenges helps each other with information, ideas, and constructive criticism.

- Many participants place a high value on holding a widely recognized certificate of interpretive competence.

California State Parks and the National Association for Interpretation share a vision of the value of quality interpretation to parks, to natural and cultural resources in California, and the world. It makes sense to unite like-minded institutions in a partnership of philosophy and economy to better serve the mission of California State Parks.

Training to Understand and Interpret Deserts Is a Hit!

By Jean Rhyne
State Park Interpreter I
Tehachapi District

On my way to the Understanding and Interpreting Deserts training course at Zzyzx, I could hardly contain my excitement as I exited at the little desert town of Baker, home of the world's tallest thermometer and countless *film noir* scenes. I was looking forward to seeing old Department friends, meeting new ones, learning about the beautiful desert, and seeing this mysterious place with a name that no one knew how to pronounce.

I've taken desert-studies courses before and expected most of the information I'd hear would be old news. I just hoped I'd get a few things out of the course while I enjoyed my time here. Boy, was I wrong! The training was fantastic--our speakers were top-notch, and every hour was full of fascinating

concepts and amazing demonstrations that I'll not only be integrating into my programs, but telling anyone else I can pin down!

Fact: *Fast-moving reptiles are striped or uniform-colored so predators can't see that they're escaping, and slower ones are mottled because they need to rely on camouflage. Now, you can see why gopher snakes and racers have different behaviors.*

Fact: *Any white-flowered plants that you see, such as Jimson weed, are usually*

Dr. Schoenherr at a lava rock habitat

interest with the amazing variety of unusual adaptations that desert animals and plants have developed. We were eager to peer deeper into this alien world as we walked outside and explored the life, death, and rebirth of vegetation prospering in a field of sharp, black lava rocks. Dr. Schoenherr let a tarantula walk on his arm!

Fact: *Female tarantulas build webs across their burrows. Male tarantulas, the ones we see walking around, strum the web to play a love song.*

Fact: *Ants always lift the largest seed they can carry. Therefore, the size of the biggest local ants shows the size of the largest available seeds. Also, different ant species don't compete because they forage for different sized seeds.*

We then headed to visit the historic Kelso Railroad Station Visitor Center, which was recently remod-



Jennifer Parker, Steve Quartieri, and Steve Bier inspect worked rock



John Werminski interpreting the ordinary

eled and has a fantastic new interpretive display, and drove to the Kelso Dunes for lunch. Several demonstrations there led to unexpected results, such as not only does black absorb heat faster than white, but it loses heat faster. That's why polar bears are white-- they're at the top of the food chain, so it's not so much for camouflage-- but to lose heat more slowly. Many desert species such as stink bugs and lizards have black coloration to lose their heat, and roadrunners have black skin under their feathers. We also guessed how deep we'd have to dig into bare, dry sand dunes to find water. After only eighteen inches, we hit damp, clumping sand, which explains how trees can grow in seemingly parched ground.

***Fact:** Antelope Ground Squirrels stay cool by drooling, pressing their thinly-haired bellies onto cool shaded sand and licking their legs.*

back to the site with coffee and wool caps, and found there had been a furry flurry of activity! Twelve out of fifteen live traps yielded a kangaroo rat; that was good but we didn't get any species diversity such as moles or mice. After photographing like the paparazzi, we let each K-rat go with its cheeks full of seeds.

We heard about the geology and paleontology of California deserts from Associate State Archaeologist/Colorado Desert District

***Fact:** Rattlesnakes have poor vision and use heat-sensitive pits to ambush small prey. Swing a hot water balloon around and the snake will charge it. (Disclaimer: the Department does not condone mocking rattlesnakes)*

That evening the facility manager demonstrated live trapping, to show what's running around after we've gone to sleep. We helped him set a trap line up the east side of the mountain along a former student's transect. The next morning, we arose before dawn and crawled

Paleontologist George Jefferson, and Dr. Joan Schneider took us out to several sites of cultural significance in the Zzyzx area. We were shown petroglyphs pecked into rock varnish and shells from a prehistoric clam bake along the dry ancient shore of Lake Manix. We were shown how to identify the "worked" rocks at Afton Canyon, such as arrowheads and chisels.

***Fact:** All used human rock shelters open to the south-east to capture heat.*

***Fact:** Bighorn sheep run uphill when they are scared. The Mojave Indians would scare them up the hill and then surprise them from behind stone blinds at the top of the hill. The sheep were tired and running slowly when they passed in front of the blinds-- an easy catch.*

We also had a variety of other presentations. John Werminski gave an enrapturing lecture on how to "Interpret the Ordinary." He taught us how to appreciate the subtleties-- picking out a particular shade of lavender that wouldn't have been noticed, which is every-



Dr. Schoenherr displays a tarantula while Fredda Stephens and Joe Hopkins move in for a closer look.

where if you look around, blended into the shadows and skyline. He also demonstrated perplexing scientific phenomena that can be observed anywhere, simply using the sun, a bush, and a broom handle. Later, using quotations from historic and modern literature, he interactively traced the diversity of perceptions of the desert across space and time. His hypnotic style was a grounding closure to the day.

***Fact:** The temperature of shaded sand in the daytime is the same as the nighttime air temperature.*

Colorado District Environmental Services Intern Paul Johnson took us on an "old-fashioned nature hike" to show how to find interpretive moments and tutored us on how to use those mysterious settings and buttons on our cameras to make average shots into professional-style photographs. Our training was wrapped up with State Park Ranger Steve Bier presenting photos of the weird and wonderful phenomena of the desert, from the mysterious Fata Morgana to the geometric shapes that ice crystals can make in the soft bottoms of puddles if you stop for a moment on a cold morning and look closely.

Halloween came in the middle of the week, so we had a costume party and jack-o-lantern contest, and watched a B-movie horror flick that was filmed there... Steve Bier and Sara Skinner made it a memorable evening with the activities.

The ambience of the site really made the training a special experience. The facilities of the old Zzyzx Mineral Springs Resort and Health Spa, in the Mojave National

Reserve, now house the California State University system's Desert Studies Center field station. The area, rich in biological diversity, hosts such unique animals as the endangered tui chub (a minnow that is only found in the three pools on site) and a variety of reptiles and desert-adapted mammals and birds. In addition, archaeologists and history buffs are attracted to this site, which still has evidence of historic and prehistoric uses.

in were once the rooms used by the spa-goers, and the tiny theatre he used for his preaching is now a classroom.

The place, Zzyzx, is pronounced "ZIE-zix" and is spelled with no vowels and meant to sound like sleep. Our delicious meals were provided by the live-in cook, and the manager and his assistant (and Lola the cat) made our stay comfortable and personal.



Mandatory class photo

Remnants of Hancock's Redoubt, a 1860 Army outpost, the old Mojave Road, a wagon road stop, an evaporative salt mining operation, the Tonopah and Tidewater Railroad, and Native American quarry sites and rock art can still be seen. The predominant historic facilities were established in 1944 by a fanatical con-artist who drained the life-savings of many, mostly elderly, seeking the health benefits of mineral springs. His resort was finally shut down after thirty years when it was found, among other things, that his big-money "miracle cure-all" potion was essentially just V-8 Juice. The buildings we stayed

Not only did I see old friends and make new ones, it was an enriching experience both for me personally and for my career with the Department. The training is expected to be offered again in a few years, as part of a series of multi-habitat courses. Watch for it and sign up! It was an educational experience for not only desert-oriented people, but those with no knowledge of the desert. We left with a new perspective on this beautiful, and usually under-appreciated, wonder of our world.

Supervisors Can Track RAPPORT Compliance in ETMS

By
Michael D. Green
Interpreter III
Monterey State Historic Park

Department policy requires that two evaluations per year are to be given to those in classifications that provide interpretive programs. At least one evaluation should be provided by a supervisor. The second can be a self (DPR 461D) or peer (DPR 461) evaluation.

Did you know that supervisors can track RAPPORT evaluation compliance through the Employee Training Management System (ETMS)? For employees who have initialized and set up profiles in ETMS, supervisors can use an "Assign Programs" function to assign RAPPORT Evaluation to an employee's Required Programs box on their ETMS homepage. Then, ETMS automatically reminds the employee every six months when an

evaluation is due by turning that program title red in their Required Programs box.

To assign RAPPORT as a Required Program:

1. Log onto your ETMS homepage and click on your [Supervisor](#) link.
2. Click on **Program(s)-Employee**.
3. Click on the underlined number in the right column that corresponds to the employee you wish to assign RAPPORT. This brings up the "Assign Programs" screen.
4. Select **RAPPORT Evaluation (DPR 461 and 461D)** from the drop-down list of all programs. (Hint: if you type in an "R" first, it will take you to the programs beginning with that letter.)



Dave Wilson and Marie Lindsey during Skills for Interpreting to Children-South in March 2009

1. Click on [Supervisor](#) link, then on [Employee](#)
2. Click on [All](#) then on the name of the employee who has been evaluated
3. Under the **Training Record** column, click on [Add](#) then type RAPPORT in the search window, click **Search** button.
4. Click **Submit**, complete the info on the form, then click **Submit**.

Select, then click the **add** button.

Once an employee has been evaluated, supervisors or training coordinators can show completion:

To see a report of compliance for multiple employees, go to your [Supervisor](#) link and click on [Reports](#), then [Program Compliance Report](#). From the drop-down menu select the title of the program for which you want a report. Now you can tell at a glance the compliance status for this or any program title you select.

Note: Your employee *must select you as their supervisor* in their ETMS Profile for you to administer these actions.



BVST 31 cadets interpret in Monterey State Historic Park.

Parent Chaperones-Use Them or Lose Them

By
Greg Kolinar
Docent

Santa Cruz District State Parks

The more you actually include parents, the more smoothly things will go, and the more successful your program will be. At least it turned out that way for me...and once you actively include parents in your program, and truly experience how much it adds to your planned activity, you may never again return to running the show by yourself.

Imagine a sunny, still morning by the ocean, with a park ranger showing a polite group of four young children the hidden wonders of a tide pool. Quiet voices, excited discovery, shared surprise and amazement. A perfect morning. That's the way it should be. Now, in your mind, add a crowd of kids to the picture, all gathered around the same tide pool and the same ranger. That's not the way it should be, but what can you do? There usually are 20+ kids in every school group, and you, as the person in charge, can only be at one tide pool at a time, with one sea star and a crowd of kids. I'm sure you've experienced the reality of such a picture for yourselves. I still like

that first picture though, the one with the ranger and only four kids. It even feels good to think about it. That's the way it should be...so why not make that picture happen in real life, with every school group, every time? You can. Here's how.

To make that picture become real you need to include active parents in your planned activities. Parents are great! They have spent years raising children and know kids pretty well. Parents are smarter than kids, most of the time. Whether they attended a university or the school of hard knocks, they have all earned degrees. I didn't even ask for their credentials the first time I made parent chaperones an active part of my tour, and I still can't get over how smoothly it went. It was picture perfect. And when I tried it the

next week...it worked again, and then again. You'll never catch me attempting to run my program without active parent support any more.

How do you do it? It's so simple it hurts. You break the kids into learning groups of 4-6 children. You assign each group to a parent. Then, at the appropriate time, you take the parents aside and show them what you want them to do with the kids. You have them take charge of their group and do what you showed them. You teach the parents and they teach the kids. It works every time, and I just explained it to you in 100 words or less! Think about it.

If what you want kids to experience and discover is clear and simple enough for the children to

Interpreters, guides, rangers, and lifeguards actively explore the tide pools of Leo Carrillo State Park with Interpreter Marie Lindsey during Skills for Interpreting to Children South in March 2009.



understand, then parents can understand it as well and then go ahead and teach it to the kids. Just keep it simple. Now you might ask, "What do all the kids do when you are working with and coaching the parents?" Simple. They gather together with their teacher who is in charge. The teacher organizes them into their groups of 4-6 students and reminds them how to work cooperatively, going over rules and consequences (just like back at school), until you're ready for them. Then, the children join the parents and do the activity. Parents take charge and direct the activity, kids participate fully, and you walk around and provide expert support and assistance to any group that needs it. At the same time, the teacher strolls among the children and watches that the groups are working smoothly and is available to assist any group that is having trouble. Everyone participates.

Once the activity is finished, there are several ways you might follow up. For example, the entire class might come together again, and one child from each group can give an account of what their group achieved. Parents, kids, teachers, and particularly docents love to listen to that kind of presentation. You could have the children report to the teacher while you prepare the parents to lead a second activity. Or possibly, it's time to head down the trail on the way to a new adventure and a new type of interaction.

Out in the field, let's say you are



Involving parents in programs at Petaluma Adobe State Historic Park

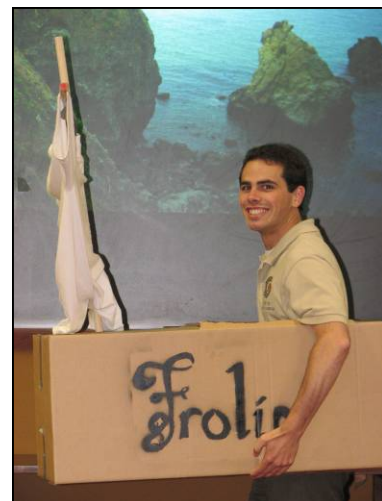
taking children to the tide pools. In that case, groups of 4-5 children are introduced to their assignment by the parent who awaits them at the assigned tide pool. Kids take turns. They wait with their hands on their knees looking into the pool until each person completes the activity. They share their experiences, and after the activity is over, they can then freely experience the tide pool with their eyes while the parent is overseeing them. Then it's back with the teacher and that same format can be repeated as many times as needed.

What if it's a completely different activity in a different place? Let's say you want children to investigate the contents of a Native American midden. Each group is given one replica midden item and parents assist them in the game of playing archaeologist by having the children discuss what this item tells them about the way Native

Americans lived. Touch and discuss. Discuss and touch. Later groups report to the whole class by displaying their item and presenting their conclusions. With a parent as coach and guide, this kind of personal involvement and interactive group learning is definitely achievable.

That's it. I'm sure you get the picture. All you have to do is to plan your activities so that parents can be a part of them. They can actively help you work with the children. Just think, no more parents drifting about on the outskirts of the group talking about the weather or on their cell phones. The students are actively involved with the ranger and adults throughout as each of the small groups is engaged in their tasks. Now that's an entirely different kind of picture than you're used to, isn't it?

Attend the Great Interpretive Trainings Our Department Offers



California's Tapestry

A Diversity Feature Article

[Spring/Summer 2009]

Interpreters are often searching for hand-held items to use in their programs. A quilt can tell a unique story about your park and about the natural and cultural world, and it can also be a creative activity to do with school children. Linda Plock, an archaeological technician with the National Park Service, tells her story about quilts. The article first appeared in *Bridge with the Past* Volume 12, No. 3, Fall 2008, a publication of the CILH Section of NAI —Editor's Note

Threads of Time

By Linda Plock

They have been around for many centuries. Providing us with warmth and beauty, folded up in cedar hope chests, closets, cardboard boxes, on the bed, under the bed and lately on the wall. What once was a necessity of life for a man in armor or a woman living in the Little Ice Age of Europe became a significant part of the heritage of a young America. As immigrants to America brought with them fabric and patterns of their old life hoping to duplicate them in the new... the art of quilting became established.

What exactly is a quilt? Technically it is a layer of fabric with another layer of some thing else in between and capped off with another layer of fabric. The something else in between was cloth strips or scraps, leaves, straw, paper, or wool. Think of it as a cloth sandwich. Fabric was homespun originally but then imported fabrics and eventually commercially-spun cloth became

available for more people. Its main purpose in this country was to show off a needleworker's skill besides keeping a family warm in the harsh climate. During Colonial times only the rich would be able to afford the time, money and good fabric to make a fine quilt for their beds. Often they were more pretty than functional. Quilts for warmth were often made of wool, bed curtains and recycled quilted petticoats. The poor usually bought blankets.

If, as a reenactor of a certain time period in this country's history, you have never thought of a quilt as a resource... think about it now. From a quilt that was made in your chosen time period you can see what types of cloth were used, what colors were used, what types of dyes produced those colors and the types of stitches used. Even if you have a whole cloth quilt made of a single color and type of cloth, you can still deduce these things.

Broderie perse and medallion quilts of the late 18th and early 19th centuries had specially made patterns of cloth which women bought in order to make them. It was said in the early fur trade of New England that the Indians loved the colors of the cloth that usually made up English bed curtains so more of that cloth should be sent over for trade shirts.

Around 1840 the industrial revolution changed the manufacturing processes of cloth and dyes and commercial cloth became more af-

fordable to the common folk. The 1840s also saw more block piecing of quilts. The blocks could be made of clothing scraps but usually had specially purchased fabrics for quilts, much like today. Since the advent of the sewing machine in 1856 in America, sewing and quilting became less of a chore for women busy with running their households. If your family owned a dry goods store, you showed off your wares in your quilt. The Civil War saw quilts being made for the abolitionist movement, raising money for the war effort and keeping soldiers warm. The patterns on the latter were simple and functionality as bedding took precedence. Bedspreads were cut up and quilted for narrow cots. In the South, where fabric became scarce during the War, you might have used your old clothing for scraps or went back to weaving for your own needs.

There are quite a few books with colored pictures of antique quilt collections in them. Some even have close-ups of the materials used or details of patterns and backings. If you are very lucky, there might be a museum with some dated period quilts on exhibit near your town. If you have any preconceived notions about quilts in a certain time period, you might be surprised at what you see. Each quilt is as individual as its maker or makers. The importance is that all are products of their time and if you want to capture the essence of the time your sewing, study them.

The Catalyst

Spring/Summer 2009

Contents

From the Editor	page 3
What's Up- Resources for Interpreters	page 4
Dear Master Interpreter	page 5
IPIT Works for Improvement	page 6
Personalizing Personal Interpretation	page 7
Skills for Interpreting to Children with Special Needs	page 8
Creating a Better Docent	page 10
Interpreting Your Way into the Hearts of Management	page 11
Allensworth Centennial: What Worked and What Fizzled	page 12
<i>A Certified Interpreter? Why?</i>	page 15
Training to Understand and Interpret Deserts Is a Hit!	page 16
Supervisors Can Track RAPPORT Compliance in ETMS	page 19
Parent Chaperones- Use Them or Lose Them	page 20
Interpretive Training Pictures	page 22
California's Tapestry	page 23

"What we do in the world flows from how we interpret the world." -Charles Birch



Interpretation and Education Division
PO Box 942896
Sacramento CA 94296-0001